1:Sanders Z-54 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1



house proprietor has edged her way into the group and asks, "But isn't he young to be a professor?" It is at this point that one pulls out the impressive credentials, beribboned and sealed, from the university authorities back in America. Though it is written in English, no one questions the authenticity of such an imposing document. Everyone is then delighted to supply any information at his command, even going so far as to ask: "What would the professor like to know about our village?" "Let's begin at the beginning. How did your village get started?"

## Location

Almost every village has some tradition about its origin; it may be legendary or historical. The following account by a native of a Peloponnesian village illustrates the legendary:

> In the old days my village was built more to the west in a place now called Palaiochori [Old Village]. My forefathers left Palaiochori and built the village where it is nowadays because a great epidemic had caused the death of many people. It is said that all of those who had danced at a wedding on a particular day died, for the evil was caused by a spook in the form of a dog which jumped from one shoulder to another. Wherever it stopped, that guest became sick and died. Those who survived the evil came and built the village of today. In the beginning they put up huts and later on houses. The country was wild and full of trees. In order to choose a good spot they took three pieces of meat and put them in three possible sites. They then noticed which piece of meat spoiled last and chose that site; they were glad that the North Wind blew upon the spot selected.[4]

Many Greek villages are of relatively recent origin and do not need to rely upon legend for an explanation of their location. Particularly in Macedonia and Thrace, scores of new villages were built to accommodate the approximately 150,000 rural refugee families coming from Asia Minor in the 1920s, although as many as two thirds of the rest of these new arrivals were installed in old villages in temporary huts or in houses vacated by the Bulgarians and Turks exchanged for the Greeks. As a rule, these villages were located near a road and on cultivable land, so that they were much more accessible than the older mountain villages.

There was some discussion at the time of resettlement about the advisability of establishing the farmers on independent farmsteads rather than in villages. Some serious disadvantages to the village system from the standpoint of efficient use of time have been set forth in various reports. Frequently not less than two or more hours each day is spent by several members of the family in traveling between their home and their fields. It is also necessary to transport all food supplies, the grain, grapes, beans, hay, and other crops, as well as all fuel, by donkey or mule over long distances, an expenditure of labor which would be unnecessary if the people lived on the land they farmed.[5]

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1



491 457 At times, one comes across an unusually good road system in what would at first seem to be an isolated area and learns, as in the case of the area south of Volos, that emigrants from these communities, who went to Egypt, sent back large sums of money for the construction of these roads, which were built at heavy cost per kilometer because of the great amount of masonry work needed. Near Xourichti, in this same area, we 443 came across a small unpadlocked building on the main road connected by a path with the village seen in the distance. We learned that this was the place where villagers left their money and orders for purchases desired from Volos. When a truck driver passed that way he would stop, pick up the money and the orders, and do the necessary shopping in Volos. When he came back he would leave the purchases in the little house, perhaps toot his horn or flash his lights, and people from the village would come to get [577] their new possessions. There were no thefts, no shortchanging, in this area of mutual trust where, before World War II, it was safe for a young woman to walk anywhere through the mountains at night unattended.

491 178 In Epirus, across Greece from this Volos area, life is lived in a different historical and physical setting. In order to learn what effect a new road had upon village people there, we went to the village of Tsepelovo. On August 20, 1952 — only a few months prior to our visit — the first automobile had arrived at the village, using the road that had been built to open up a large forest to be exploited for the people's benefit. As we sat in the office of the community council and talked to the village secretary, [494] [804] we learned what the road had already accomplished for this village. The first advantage mentioned was the lowered transportation costs, for the hauling charges per oka (2.8 pounds) by truck are only one fifth or one fourth of those by donkey. When pressed to give other results, the secretary put it this way:

[342] Now we can build homes with sand and cement; formerly it was too expensive to carry these in by animals. Formerly we built our stone houses with lime and mud as mortar, and that is why they tend to crumble so quickly. [438] Here we produce about 14,000 okas (about 20 tons) of walnuts each year. We received little for them because of the transportation charges; now the merchant comes here in a truck and pays us cash and gives a higher price. Today we can also sell our lumber because, before the road came, we couldn't very well strap long boards to the donkeys.

● [484] We used to spend twelve-and-a-half hours going by animal to Ioannina, the only large city nearby. Now we do it in two-and-a-half hours by car. The grocer [735] can sell fresh goods, whereas formerly he had only staples. Although we had great riches here, we also had great poverty so that beggars would go from house to house. The road reduces this inequality. Many of our men who had no other income earned much money working on the construction.

[758] In case we get sick we can be carried down by car and not have to ride a donkey.

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1



## Transhumance in the Peloponnesos

We were on our way to Tripolis, the chief interior city of the Peloponnesos. Earlier we had crossed the Corinth Canal, had stopped for gas at Corinth, and gone on to Argos, perhaps the most ancient city of Greece. Oranges were ripe on the trees in the square around the cathedral, where buses pulled up to let their through passengers have a bite to eat. Turkeys and chickens tied by the leg to the top of the bus gobbled and squawked intermittently, but long ago had ceased to struggle for freedom. Leaving Argos, we had begun the long winding climb that eventually brought us to a mountain-top view of the blue Gulf of Argos and of the small port city of Nauplion across the way beneath a fortress-topped summit. As always in Greece, the shifting light gave a magic cast to the hills whose eroded sides revealed a rainbow of color, to the brown cultivated fields below, and to the brilliant iridescent water. Such landscapes, ethereal in quality, are the paths into another world, where the legendary universe of Homer seems to have flowed into the pastoral existence of Greek shepherd families today. Suddenly, that life teemed about us.

The sheep were rounding the same curve as we were, but in the opposite direction — hundreds of them pushing and shoving and terrified at the sight of a noisy, shiny automobile. We quickly pulled to the side and parked. The shepherds whistled and called, brandishing their long crooks until they finally got the huge flock of sheep and goats past us. Having encountered and met this emergency, the shepherds were ready for a cigarette and a short chat. They were from the village of Valtetsi, a few miles beyond Tripolis, up in the mountains, and were headed with their flocks and families for Kranidi, approximately twenty-five miles below Nauplion. We learned that they were following the practice geographers call *transhumance*,[5] or the moving of the herds, as the seasons change, from a summer to a winter pasture, particularly from mountain to lowland grazing. These were not nomads in an endless round of movement on schedule from one good grassland to another. These people from Valtetsi had left their village of solid stone houses, where they spend approximately half of the year, for a definite location along a coastal plain where they were to spend the other half of the year.[6]

The shepherds to whom we talked represented five families traveling together. Each family had from one hundred to one hundred fifty sheep, its major source of sustenance and income; women and children accompanied the men and animals as a whole family. The trip from Valtetsi to Kranidi took eight days of slow travel. On this trek and at its lowland site each family managed its own affairs, with the father in charge.[7] There was no cooperative arrangement of a chief shepherd which I was to find later on in a journey to Northern Greece — simply a movement of parents and

1:Sanders Z-54 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1
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we ate, we watched the milking going on nearby. There was a rhythmic pitter-patter as the milk was squirted into the big receptacles. Each animal was named according to some physical characteristic, corresponding to "Brownie," "Dotty," "Blackie," or after some person whom the shepherd thought the sheep resembled. As the men sat there we asked them how they milked when it rained. They told us that they simply put on their heavy waterproof capes and kept right on milking.

Some of the sheep were sheared. We learned that the shearing was done below (on the plains) and sold unwashed for "it weighs more with the oil in it." The unsheared animals were simply carrying up to the summer camp the supply of wool that the women would need to use in making their blankets and heavy garments. Some of the animals were sheared in various symmetrical patterns, a style of decoration which pleases the children, so the older people said. These fancy designs are not nearly so common now as formerly, according to Berates.

Despite the magnificent mountain setting and the fascinating activities going on in the fire-lit darkness, the conversation itself — focusing on the present problems facing nomadic peoples — stands out most vividly as I look back upon this evening. Since my central interest was social change, I welcomed the turning of the talk into such a channel.

Without any doubt, the life of the nomad is getting more difficult every year. A major problem had already been brought out in many conversations along the roads of Greece as well as with the people of Valtetsi: land on the plains below is no longer so available as it used to be. Scientific agriculture is winning the day and pastoralism is on the way out. But Berates and his men were most bitter about the difficulties they faced on the road between summer and winter pastures. We had noticed the many signs represented by a pile of stones perhaps a foot high or by tufts of straw twisted onto a branch, warning the nomad not to trespass. These signs were numerous even as one approached and entered the mountain areas. That was why the men had had to drive in one day the sheep all the way from Kalpaki to Konitsa, using routes shorter than the main road but nevertheless arriving late at night. Tired from this experience, they felt such a long march to be most unfair. One man said, "Here in the mountains a peasant will sow only one oka of seed in a field so he will have an excuse to keep us out."

The field policeman, who serves a commune although under the authority of the central government, patrols his beat most vigorously during these days of migration. He not only sees that the animals keep out of the forbidden fields, but also enforces the custom that no nomad family camp in one place longer than twenty-four hours. But most field policemen are quite ready to show the nomads where they can find a camp site in the event some old one is no longer available, for these guards expect a tip — a box of cigarettes or "whatever one has the pleasure to give," as Berates put it.

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 1963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika



the easy access to roads and transportation to and from the village has important consequences for its culture and social structure.

The Boeotian plain is bounded by mountain systems and the sea. Running west and north, the Parnis, Kithaeron, and Helicon ranges as well as Parnassos itself separate it from the plains of Attica. The town of Lamia on the small Sperchios plain to the north and the west can be reached only by traversing parts of the Kallidromon and Ghiona mountains. To the east, an extension of the Kallidromon range makes access to the Gulf of Atalanti difficult. But the most important road which runs over and around the mountains and through the plains from Athens to Thessalonika has been paved throughout its length since World War II. It is now a two-lane asphalt highway which serves as a truck and bus route of major importance in the communications system of the country. In most of Boeotia, the highway runs more or less parallel with and not far from the tracks of the Athens-to-Thessalonika railroad.

The village of Vasilika lies on the slope of a low ridge just a half mile off this main highway. Since the summer of 1956, a local bus comes through the main street of the village twice a day, at 6:00 in the morning and at noon.

Going in the direction of Athens, ninety miles distant, the bus passes a British Petroleum (BP) station and restaurant a mile and a half down the road and traverses several villages. Its destination, however, is usually Levadhia, fifteen miles from Vasilika. Levadhia is the provincial capital and marketing center of some 12,000 population. Here bus connections to Athens may be made.

In the opposite direction, the nearest village of some size and importance is Kifisokhori. It lies five miles up the road from Vasilika. Kifisokhori has, among other facilities not available in Vasilika, flour mills, large grocery stores, barbers, doctors, a pharmacy, a movie, and several taxis. Whether they use the bus or load their horses with flour for the mill and walk by way of the shortcut through the fields, the people of Vasilika go most frequently to Kifisokhori.

Further north and off to the west, but only about eight miles past Kifisokhori, is Amphiklia. This town is the seat for tax collections and other governmental financial matters for the fiscal district in which Vasilika is situated. On the 16th of each month, for example, the priests of the village within Amphiklia's jurisdiction gather in the town to collect government salaries. Amphiklia also has a coeducational gymnasium (the approximate equivalent of an American high school and junior college combined). Several boys and girls from Vasilika live in that town to attend the school.

The people of Vasilika can also travel in the direction of the sea. The dirt road which starts at the highway leads to the houses of the village, then becomes the main street, and finally extends beyond the settlement between the borders of the fields and the foot of the ridge on which the village is situated. Never free of ruts, of dust, and in the winter, of mud, the road narrows and deteriorates further as it passes the last village house. Nevertheless, pedestrians, donkeys, horses, tractors, and even, with some difficulty, trucks and buses can get through. Half a mile past the last village house, at the banks of the Kiphisus, this road meets the road to Atalanti. Buses from Levadhia that have turned off

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Vasilika



49 onto the Atalanti road at the BP station will stop here if there are any passengers.

484 The asphalt and dirt roads are not the only routes by which the village can be approached. The local railroad station of Helikon is just a mile up the highway going toward Kifisokhori. Trains from Athens stop at Helikon at least once a day. The train can also be used to reach Kifisokhori. Thus, a resident of Vasilika can reach any of the main towns of eastern Greece with relative ease and at no great expense, even from the standpoint of his own standard of living.

438 The same transportation routes which enable the villagers to leave their
443 homes also enable people and products to enter the village. Itinerant vendors of
484 fresh fish, oranges, tomatoes, ice cream, cloth, crockery, sacred pictures, and the like reach Vasilika over these roads. Tinsmiths, blacksmiths, and cobblers use them to come to set up shop for a day or two near one of the coffee houses. The same roads bring gypsies who occasionally pass through the village to beg and to entertain. On the many occasions when family gatherings are in order, the town relatives of the villagers can reach Vasilika with ease.

487 This description has so far primarily concerned itself with Vasilika's
484 accessibility to town or city centers of commerce, government, and recreation. But there are also paths through the fields and into and over the surrounding
49 hills that lead to the neighboring villages. One can still walk or ride a horse or a donkey to reach these settlements. For the women of Vasilika, these are the important routes. By following them, they can reach the homes of their parents and their daughters, attend the engagements, weddings, and saint's day celebrations in their home villages, and perhaps help out when a daughter has a child. These same paths bring the relatives of Vasilika's women into the village on similar occasions. From the standpoint of the rural economy, this network of
[205] paths permits the movement of farm laborers among the villages. Indeed, it is in this way that the postman walks from village to village carrying the mail.

621 The stress on the many avenues of contact with other people and com-
484 munities available to Vasilika's population should not lead one to imagine a bustling, busy center with a constant ebb and flow of traffic. The exact nature of movement in and around the village can be better understood if the spatial arrangement of Vasilika's buildings is known. Social relations among the villagers are also affected by these arrangements.

## Inside Vasilika

361 The ridge, on the lowest slopes of which most of the structures are built,
[49] lies, as I have said, a half mile from the main highway and somewhat parallel to it. The highway runs from northwest to southeast, Vasilika's ridge from northwest to east. To reach the first village structure, one walks north about three-
[346] tenths of a mile on a dirt road leading from the highway. Vineyards and fields are on the right; to the left stands the new one-room schoolhouse built in 1959,
[245] with its play yard and surrounding wire fence. A stand of young pines and another of young cypresses, newly planted by the school children, adjoined the
[764] schoolhouse in 1961. On the road, past the schoolhouse, a little further to the

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houses directly on the village street are fairly close to it, so that the protrusion of one wall obscures the view from the roadside entrance of the next house. Four of the substantial village households along the main street have high enclosing walls on the street side.

Either by inadvertence or by design, such an orientation of buildings has certain consequences. It successfully limits the ability of the members of any village household to see directly just what is happening in more than two or three neighboring households. Except for such immediate neighbors, people may have to make a deliberate effort to find out what is going on in other sections of the village. And the signs may not be easy to interpret. The smoke rising from an oven down the hill indicates that the oven is in use. But it may be the owner who is using it, or some other woman who may have borrowed it to bake her bread. Or perhaps she is baking a *pita* (a kind of pie). Who knows? Besides, much of the movement of people to and from their homes has to do with what, from the villagers' point of view, are family affairs. Trips connected with the possible sale of tobacco, with the purchase of finery for a festival, with the preliminaries involved in arranging marriages, or with the supervision of any property owned elsewhere, are considered private family business. One therefore does not make a public show of setting out to attend to such affairs. People will make all preparations inside the house and leave just in time to catch a bus. If most people are indoors or in the fields that day, a departure may not be noted until the evening discussions in the coffeehouse. Or perhaps not even then, since few men follow a regular pattern of coffeehouse attendance.

The point here is not that the people of Vasilika cannot and do not learn about the activities of the other villagers, but that the acquisition of such information comes with some conscious effort and often with some difficulty. Once obtained it is highly prized. One gets the impression that about some matters, at least, everyone is playing a perpetual game of hide and seek. Each family does its best to keep certain aspects of its own affairs from leaking out and every other family does its best to uncover the secrets. Each group succeeds somewhat in its purpose and the taste even of limited accomplishment serves to keep the game going. The placement and character of the buildings in Vasilika contribute to the intriguing quality of the process.

## Movement in and through the Village

To return to the general question of the pattern of traffic and movement in Vasilika: The public focus of the village is at the western end of the settlement, and remains on the level plain. Many visitors to the village, therefore, never travel further, either out east or up the hill, than the *aghora*. But some trucks, tractors, horses, mules, donkeys, wagons, and even occasional taxies are driven through the entire settlement on their way to and from the fields near the river. The villagers themselves contribute much of this kind of traffic in the spring, summer, and early fall when they go daily to the fields and transport

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Vasilika



equipment and produce on their animals or, as two families do, on tractors. 621
They are joined by farmers from neighboring villages whose fields lie adjacent 484
to Vasilika and who travel through the village to reach them. Trucks come to 494
pick up cotton, tobacco, wheat for the mill, and the like and, therefore, are seen 512
more frequently whenever the various crops are being harvested. In any case, whenever there is movement along the entire length of the settlement, it occurs most densely in the early morning just after dawn and in the early evening just before sundown. As the labor of the day starts, in addition to the other traffic, 233
someone from each of the households in which sheep and goats are owned leads 484
the animals up the hill to the shepherds who will watch over them during the 512
day. In the evening, the sheep are brought back again, but the goats often find 621
their way home without any help. A first encounter with a lone goat coming around the corner of a village house, as it suddenly appears in the violet light of early dusk, is a startling experience. The soft light at the beginning and the end of these days is associated with the delicate tinkle of the sheep and goat bells as the animals move around the village. The entire ebb and flow of movement diminishes to an irregular trickle during the Mediterranean winter months from November to January when people stay in the village proper for most of the day.

Vasilika's shepherds and their families also participate in the main patterns of movement, except that the shepherds continue to go out daily through the winter and may leave the village entirely for the summer months.

But traffic in Vasilika is rarely a mass movement. Rather, there is always 484
a range of time within which the villagers consider it feasible to carry out any 512
activity. Each family moves at its own pace within the range. Even during the 241
busy agricultural seasons, watching from the vantage point of a terrace facing a 805
part of the main street at the east side of the *aghora,* one sees, first, a man going by in the direction of the river, leading a horse which carries a cultivator in its saddle; for ten minutes no one goes by, then a young man passes in the same direction; for five minutes nothing, then a woman and her grown daughter go past in the other direction carrying hoes for work in the cotton fields. A few [492]
minutes later, two young brothers go by, one leading and the other riding a horse sidesaddle; and so it goes until there is a longer period with virtually no movement at all. What is more, each day, even in the same season, the people involved in the movement will vary. The man who was first to go out one morning may leave a half-hour later the next; a girl who did the washing at home one day, and so did not appear at all, will be seen going out to the fields on the following morning. Such variation in activities both as regards the time when [221]
each of the village families starts on any project, and also with respect to the timing of activities from day to day by the members of any one household, appears again in the seasonal shifts of activities. The first major agricultural task 245
in early spring is the pruning of the grape vines. For a period of several weeks 221
almost every man who passes by is carrying a pruning hook. But here too, families start and end their pruning on different days. Only the comments on the situation are uniform. Each man complains of his blistered hands and aching

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 963 EH1 Greece EH1
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back, remarks that pruning is especially hard work because it is the first job in spring after the winter's rest, and usually finishes by saying, "What can we do? Wine is good, but it takes hard work."

The movement of people in and out of Vasilika is not dependent on the agricultural cycle alone. I have already mentioned the visits of vendors, traders, and government officials to the village. Each saint's day brings some visitors to Vasilika, for the men and boys of the village celebrate the birthday of the saint after whom they were named, and not their own birthdays. On St. George's Day, for example, relatives who live in surrounding villages come to visit the George in Vasilika who is kin to them. The number of the visitors on these days is thus directly related to the number of men and boys in the village who have been baptized with the name of the saint being honored. On St. John's Day, St. George's Day, and St. Constantine's Day, for example, there are many visitors to Vasilika. There is no one named Spiros or Petros in the village, so that St. Spiridon's Day and St. Peter's Day bring no visitors at all.

The periods of greatest density of population in the village are the two or three days of *paniyiri* (the patron saints' day festival), when relatives and strangers by the hundreds come to the village for the festivities, and Christmas and Easter, when those who formerly lived in Vasilika return to their *patridha* for a few days. Vasilika is least fully populated in midsummer when individuals and families attend the *paniyiria* of other villages in the region. They usually choose those villages in which they have relatives, and stay for a few days. At this season, also, some families go to watering places for a week or two, or camp on Parnassos to avoid the heat of Vasilika.

The arhythmic quality of the movement of people, animals, and vehicles through the village has been described. It now remains to say that the pace of movement is always slow even when it is most purposeful. No one strides briskly along the road or paths of the village; only children are ever seen running. The pace seems to be set by the slow walk of a loaded horse or mule or donkey. The villagers take the long leisurely strides they need to accompany these pack animals, whenever they go from place to place, even when they walk without them. Slow action is characteristic also of the performance of any task. No one is ever in a hurry. Women cook and serve with efficiency but without speed; men load a horse equally efficiently but again without speed. Their movements are controlled, and the exercise of that control gives an impression of vitality, of a tenseness which makes the slowness a sign of power and deliberation, never of lassitude or indifference.

When a visitor returns to Vasilika, he may ask, *"Ti nea?"* "What's new?" He often receives the quasi-rhyming response *"Isichia,"* "All quiet." The response means "The round of life is going on as usual. Besides, nothing much ever happens in this place, anyway." And in some sense, the villagers actually believe what they say. The village is the physical center of the lives of the inhabitants; in spite of their trips out of it, and the coming of visitors to the village, the people of Vasilika see and talk to their fellow villagers more frequently than they see and talk to nonvillagers. They even express considerable satisfaction with some of the obvious village-wide changes of the last few years

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 1963 EH1 Greece EH1
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of the dowry. Rents are high and earnings relatively low in cities so that houses are a good investment. However, since building materials must be bought, and contractors paid, in cash, the houses may take many years to build. The young couple may then move into the habitable shell, and the rest of the dwelling will be completed out of the farmer's then current income. This kind of dowry-on-the-installment-plan becomes part of the marriage contract. It is often a source not only of continuing long-term discussions between a farmer and his town son-in-law, but also a source of quarrels—what in Greece are called *fasaries*.

The rate of movement of farmers' daughters into the towns and cities has been accelerating in the last decade, but marriages to urban husbands are not a new phenomenon. Between 1930 and 1950, at least five of Vasilika's women married "into Athens."

This type of marriage, like those discussed above in which both bride and groom are members of farm families, accelerates land sales and exchanges. The network of association which develops between Vasilika's residents and their relatives in Athens and the towns, is, however, perhaps the most important consequence of the urban marriages of village women (Friedl 1959a). In addition to the economic reasons for continuing relationships, there are several customary patterns which increase the frequency of contacts between the two groups. Lonely village mothers are grateful for visits from their married daughters and their grandchildren, and the midsummer season not uncommonly finds city women with their children back in the village visiting their parents, often for as long as a month or two. A return to one's village for Easter, sometimes for most of the Holy Week as well, is a well-known pattern in Greece. *Paniyiri* in one's *patridha* (home village) is another occasion for visiting.

Journeys in the opposite direction also occur with some frequency. Village men and women, when ill, may enter hospitals in a town in which they have sons or daughters, or brothers or sisters. Village men visit their town brothers and bring their children; occasionally a child spends a summer with his town aunt or uncle. Visits to the village or to the town usually last several days. They are made possible by still another congruent pattern of Greek culture. Neither the villagers nor their town relatives seem to have any strong need for personal privacy. Visiting relatives are bedded down on pallets when there are not enough regular beds, and it is not considered either indecent or especially uncomfortable for one or even two families to sleep in the same room. It is through this intervisiting process that so many urban traits of culture are introduced to the villagers and, indeed, that some village patterns are conserved in urban areas.

An additional consequence of the town marriages of village girls is that rural wealth derived from land flows into the cities. This wealth is an addition to what the productivity of land normally contributes to urban centers in the form of food, taxes, and the export of rural produce. A portion of the farmer's profits, through the dowry, is being used, it would seem, directly to support a part of the urban population. When the dowries are invested in housing or in small commercial enterprises, many low-salaried employees, civil service workers,

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) EH1 Greece EH1
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been threatened with eviction but had not responded even to this. The priest had called the men of the community together to try to get backing for his decision to evict the man. The authority was granted him on that rainy Sunday, but the shepherd finally agreed to go part way toward meeting the demand and continued to live in the house.

## Religious Feast Days

If the formal organization of church affairs involves village-wide action or concern only in times of crisis, certain feasts and ceremonies of the Greek Orthodox Church certainly provide a focus of interest for the entire village at regular intervals during the year. The most conspicuous of these is the sequence of events by which the villagers celebrate Easter. The Sunday before Lent begins is the particular day which starts the holiday observances in Vasilika. After church services, children ran about in the morning trying to throw powdered soot at each other and at unsuspecting adults. Later in the day, the children and unmarried men and women dressed in costumes in preparation for the arrival of the musicians—this time there were a clarinetist, a violinist, and the player of a *sanduri* (dulcimer). Some boys and girls dressed as animals and their trainers went around in groups trying to frighten the very small children or just laughing at their own antics. The young people dressed themselves as gypsies, and some of the boys put on women's clothes and walked around with mincing steps and female gestures, while some of the girls donned men's clothes and twirled false moustaches. Throughout the afternoon and early evening the musicians sat in the *agbora* and the young people and their elders danced in the space between the two coffeehouses, as virtually all the rest of the village population sat and watched. Some spectators sat at the coffeehouse tables drinking beer or soda; others brought chairs from home to sit along the walls of the houses near the *agbora*. Still others watched from second-story windows overlooking the area. All the spectators sat quietly and without expression. Those who danced paid the musicians and occasionally the watchers would proffer a glass of *ouzo* (anise liqueur) to the male dancers and to the musicians.

The dances themselves were the most commonly known traditional round dances of the Greek countryside: the *kalamatyanos, sirtos,* and *tsamikos,* danced in Vasilika by both men and women, but usually not at the same time. Men danced the *zembekikos* and the *khasapikos* as solos.

On this occasion, and on any other when musicians came to the village, the women of some of the more sophisticated families joined their male relatives sitting around the small coffeehouse tables.

In the evening, several families joined together for a meat-eating feast, after which bonfires were lit in different sections of the village; this time the adults joined in the carnival spirit of practical jokes and danced and sang in the security of their own neighborhoods until early morning. The next day is "Clean Monday." Many of the villagers visited Kifisokhori, which has a carnival

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 1963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika



with a float competition on this day. In 1956, the winning float was a huge replica of the Trojan horse. 796 [484]

The events of Holy Week, with their culmination in the feasting and dancing on Easter Sunday, are from the villagers' point of view the most important time of the year. They anticipate *to Paskha* all the rest of the year; the women in particular asked about how Americans celebrated Easter more frequently than they asked about any other American custom, and whenever any general discussion of different customs came up, the women would spontaneously start describing Holy Week. Not the least of the reasons for the anticipation of Easter is that it is a spring festival and the villagers wait impatiently for spring. They look forward to the warmth of the sun after the cold and rainy winter, and they speak with affection of the beauty of the wild flowers which cover the hillsides in early spring. [541] [177]

During Holy Week in 1956, Maundy Thursday services began at 8:40 in the evening. Men and boys, as well as some women who rarely attended Sunday mass, appeared for the service, and on Good Friday and Easter Sunday virtually the entire village population, except for tiny infants and those who had to care for them, was present. By Thursday evening, relatives of the villagers from the surrounding villages and towns and from Athens had begun to arrive and to appear at the church. Just as on ordinary Sundays, the church filled gradually as the service progressed. Older men stood at the stalls up front, and several elderly women and pregnant women sat on chairs which were brought in for them and were placed in the back of the church in the woman's section. Women visitors were offered chairs; some accepted, some did not. Two of the village women got tired at one point and squatted on the floor, but as usual, the children, the younger men, and almost all the girls and women stood throughout. The service lasted until 11:00. In the course of it, there was considerable restlessness and low-voiced conversation among the men and giggling among the girls. But at the culmination of the service, when the image of Jesus on the Cross was brought from behind the screened altar and placed in the center of the church, there was complete quiet. 796 794 [574] [516] [778]

Many of the villagers can recite or chant the portions of the New Testament which are read as part of the Holy Week services, and do so under their breath—really only to themselves, since the priest and the chanters sing the chants aloud. Even among these villagers, however, very few have a literal understanding of the text, for it is in New Testament Greek, which is a generalized form of Eastern Mediterranean Greek developed in the last centuries of the pagan and early centuries of the Christian era. It is therefore about as different from the contemporary demotic Greek spoken in the village as Chaucerian English is from Modern English. Nevertheless, all the villagers know the main outlines of the New Testament depicting the crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Christ, and know which portions are being sung and symbolically re-enacted at each of the Holy Week services. 788 198

The villagers say that on Good Friday no one should work either in the fields or in the house, but these prohibitions were not strictly adhered to. In the 796 [461]

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Athens-Piraeus region—is no more than about 85,000 souls. In terms of parishes there is considerable disparity between different dioceses: that of Ioannina, in Epirus, one of the largest, includes 230 parishes—many of them mere hamlets of forty or fifty families—while that of Nevrokopi, on the frontier of eastern Macedonia, has only fifteen. The average number is rather less than 100. If we take the twenty-four dioceses of Macedonia and Thrace, for example, we find that the average works out at seventy-eight parishes to the diocese, while the metropolitans of Philippi and Neapolis, Xanthi, Nevrokopi, Eleftheroupolis, Nea Zichni, Alexandroupolis and Hierissos all have less than sixty communities committed to their care, and only five bishops—the metropolitans of Salonica, Drama, Kilkis, Serres and Florina—more than 100.

As against this comparatively low average population and number of parishes one has, of course, to set in the balance the extremely primitive nature of the communications which the Greek bishop can command. To this day the majority of the villages of northern Greece are inaccessible to wheeled transport, at any rate during the winter months; and while the truly remarkable achievements of the last few years—the repair of the shattered railways, and the construction of roads and air-strips—have given Greece a very fair system of long-distance communications, the facilities which most bishops enjoy for travel within their own dioceses remain much as they have been since apostolic days. The metropolitan of a country diocese will think nothing of long journeys by mule or mountain pony across appallingly difficult terrain, his episcopal vestments slung from the high wooden saddle; of fording torrents swollen by the melting snows, and negotiating precipitous slopes where the path seems scarcely to afford adequate foothold for a goat—much less for an elderly ecclesiastic. It is little wonder that many mountain villages saw their father in God but seldom, even in the days before the natural hazards which confronted the traveller had been supplemented by mines and wandering bands of *katsapliades*, as the Communists were styled in the villages.

When we turn to the internal organisation of the dioceses we find many features which cannot but seem strange to most western Christians. We have come to take for granted the fact that a bishop, charged with the pastoral care of a vast and unmanageable diocese, inevitably delegates most of his priestly functions to his parish clergy. In the small country dioceses of Greece, however, the bishop retains a far greater measure of

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## A MACEDONIAN DIOCESE

During the weeks which followed I had occasion to correspond with this prelate as to the state of his diocese, and received a pressing invitation to come and see for myself the desperate conditions resulting from eight years of all but continuous warfare.

Some months went by before an opportunity presented itself, and then one morning in February, 1950, found me travelling westwards from Kozani in a jeep belonging to the 2nd Army Corps. When I had last come this way, the previous March, we had been constrained to travel in convoy: a seemingly endless line of heavy army trucks laden with provisions, fodder and ammunition for the outlying garrisons of northern Pindos. It had been the eve of the festival of the Annunciation —which is also the day on which Greece commemorates the raising of the standard of revolt by the Archbishop of Patras in 1821—and every vehicle was decked with evergreens and plastered with patriotic slogans:

*ΖΗΤΩ Ο ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ*
*ΖΗΤΩ ΤΟ ΕΘΝΟΣ*
*ΖΗΤΩ Ο ΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ.*

The wild, mountainous tract of country that lies south and west of Kozani is a desolate region at all times, and never more so than in early February when the outworks of the great fortress of Pindos are veiled in snow, and icy winds scour the exposed valley which leads westward away from the haunts of men. A mile or two from Siatista the road forked and we turned southwards out of the teeth of the wind, the lightly-laden jeep lurching and jolting over the deeply-scored, rock-strewn surface of a truly Hellenic road—"the worst road in all Macedonia", the driver assured me with emphasis.

At Grevena—set drab and cheerless amongst low hills, the gaunt ruin of the orphanage dark against the sky—boulders gave place to mud. It lapped about us as we turned out of the market, where I had a fleeting glimpse of whiskered *papades* in rusty cassocks sprawled round a table amidst the dull gleam of copper pans and cauldrons. A veritable sea of mud, churned by the wheels of heavy vehicles, stretched unbroken from the steps of the regimental headquarters towards the broken line of ramshackle dwellings beyond the river.

Here on the furthermost fringe of Macedonia the road was swallowed up in the muddy deeps; beyond the cottages lay the massive rampart of Pindos, traversed only by mule-tracks winding high among the

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inevitably elapse before the Bishop could hope to be in a position to make a detailed statement. He instructed his secretary to provide me with a report embodying such information as had reached him. Grevena itself had suffered a heavy bombardment during the retreat of 1941 and the cathedral church of the Annunciation had been seriously damaged (the old cathedral of St. George had been destroyed by fire several years earlier). On the outskirts of the town lay a little church dedicated to St. Archelaos of Larissa. This had become the parish church of the refugees. Here, from 1947 onwards, the refugee clergy had assembled daily to sing mattins and evensong, and on Sundays and festivals to celebrate together the divine mysteries. This church, as I subsequently discovered, also served as a centre for the distribution of rations to the vast multitude of the homeless who dwelt in the nissen huts on the edge of the town. On my way back to the metropolis I ran into a large group of refugee clergy. They had got wind of my projected expedition and begged me to visit their villages and to bring back news of their condition after three years' abandonment.

I returned to the regimental headquarters at dusk, armed with my report, and spent an hour poring over maps with a young captain from Volos. We finally decided upon two itineraries, each of several days' duration. The first would enable me to see something of those parts of the diocese which were still uninhabited, and about which the Bishop had little information; the second, to visit several villages north and west of Grevena to which the refugees had lately returned. Arrangements having been made for a nine o'clock start the following morning, I returned to the metropolis for supper and discussed the Zoe movement and the architectural projects of the Metropolitan of Siatista with the Lord Theokletos until it was time for bed.

Saturday, February 4th, dawned fine and dry. The first stage of my journey was accomplished in a jeep driven by an *Epirotes* who had concealed two British soldiers in his house at Iannina during the occupation. Less than five miles from Grevena the track which we were following gave up the ghost and further progress was impossible. At this point we were met by a sergeant and two soldiers, mounted on mules and leading a handsome bay mare caparisoned after the European manner. It took us an hour to climb to the village of Mavranaioi, which was strongly garrisoned (it had been partly inhabited since the previous October). After lunching with the officers of the garrison I resumed

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727 my journey with an escort of seven soldiers, and with a corporal of the gendarmerie as guide.

At three o'clock we reached Mavronoros, the 'Black Mountain'; a small village, quite deserted and in ruins. Somewhat surprisingly, [346] the church (which was dedicated to St. Theodore) had survived the bombardment. A single projectile had apparently found its mark and a portion of the vault had collapsed, but the walls were sound enough and the paintings which covered them had not as yet suffered greatly from exposure to the elements. A chapel on the hill above the village was completely gutted and almost every house was in ruins. So complete was the destruction that we were unable to identify the remains of the school.

● 484 A brief halt and we set out towards Ziakas, where I was to spend the night. We followed a water-course for some distance before intercepting the mule track. The ground had thawed since morning and the going was laborious. On a ridge commanding a wide prospect of this abandoned countryside we met the relief escort from the Ziakas garrison, and I reluctantly relinquished my handsome mount for a mule saddled after the school of Macedonia. We crossed the Venetikos by an ancient bridge and reached the headquarters of the garrison, a kilometre below the ruins of the village, a little before sunset.

727 It was too late to see anything of Ziakas that day, but the isolated community was delighted to have a visitor and the evening passed merrily enough. The night was chilly and I slept fitfully. From the [136] [231] mountains, which rise to close on 5,000 feet above the village, came the howling of wolves and jackals. Two wolves had ventured into Mavranaioi itself a few nights earlier, and, despite the vigilance of the sentries, had attacked and killed one of the mules picketed amongst the cottages. There had been neither sheep nor goats in these mountains for more than three years.

The morning was cold and cheerless without trace of sun. I took leave of my hosts about half-past nine and was accompanied to the village by a young lieutenant from Salonica. Ziakas had not only been burned by the Germans; it had more than once been the scene of heavy [346] [532] fighting within the last three years. The church stood at the entrance to the village. It was completely ruined, but a few paintings still clung to the walls of the apse, and, amidst the waste and desolation wrought by man's sin, the Son of the Virgin, the Alpha and the Omega, raised His hands in blessing. The destruction of the village—one of the

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largest in the region—was complete and spectacular. The shattered walls were daubed with Communist slogans. We threaded our way amongst the ruined houses to a building on the farthest side of the village which had been roughly repaired to afford shelter for an advanced outpost, drank a glass of cognac whilst my escort laced up their boots and buckled on their equipment, and left for Spelaion and Trikomon shortly after eleven.

The paths were ice-bound and treacherous, the snow deep in places. Spelaion came into view after half an hour, set amongst towering cliffs. A long and laborious ascent between high rocks, the Venetikos murmuring through its gorge far below, the path clinging to precipitous cliffs rising from the dwarf oaks and myrtle to lose themselves in the grey mists that swirled about their summits, brought us to a point immediately below the village. After a stiff climb through massive fortifications of uncertain date, we suddenly found ourselves looking down upon a tiny Byzantine church with twin domes, sharply outlined against the untrodden snow; a sombre red jewel laid in a setting of purest white.

This proved to be the catholicon of a small monastery, dedicated to the Mother of God. The interior of the church was dark and silent as a tomb; within the sanctuary liturgical books, eikons and vestments were strewn in confusion. The book of the Gospels lay closed upon the holy table, between two reliquaries of tarnished silver. We found a few stumps of candle and lighted them before the eikons of the Lord and His Mother; the spluttering flames banished the darkness and disclosed the presence of a host of emaciated figures gazing down upon us from wall and eikonostasis. We said a prayer and withdrew.

Though the church was undamaged, the other buildings which enclosed three sides of the roughly quadrangular space occupied by the monastery were all in ruins. Below, in the centre of the village, we found a second church, dedicated to St. Athanasius. This too had escaped serious damage, though the windows were unglazed and dead leaves lay piled against the eikonostasis and rustled about the throne of the bishop. Inaccessible on the cliffs above the Venetikos, Spelaion seemed built to withstand a siege, and we were not surprised to find that it had apparently served as a base for the *katsapliades*. A large house in the centre of the village had evidently been the Communist headquarters, and party slogans were scrawled over every wall. When we returned to the monastery, where the animals had been tethered, the candles still

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727 flickered within the church. Leaving the saints to their solitary vigil we plunged deeper into the uninhabited wastes that stretched southward toward Metsovo and the Thebaid of Staghi.

During the course of the next four days we worked our way eastwards to Trikomon and Kipouryio, and then turned north towards Mavranaioi and Grevena, to complete the first part of my itinerary. At three of the villages on our route there were isolated garrisons: otherwise the whole district lay abandoned. We passed through hamlet after hamlet where every house was destroyed, where churches stood open to the skies and no living creature broke the three-year silence. At Kipouryio the chapel [669] of St. Paraskeve—a saint whose apparent connexion with the sixth day [346] of the week (in Greek, *paraskw*, the day of preparation) has given rise [776] to some very singular local cults in the country districts—had been stripped of its furnishings and turned into a hospital by the Communists: empty bottles and boxes which had contained medical supplies lay strewn about the building.

[657] Upon our return to Grevena we encountered a vast multitude of ragged children straggling back towards the refugee camp, grasping huge slabs of bread and honey: more than 4,000 children were being fed daily at the *estia* outside the high school. We found the Lord Theokletos a little concerned lest I should have fallen into the hands of the *katsapliades*—communications in the mountains out beyond Mavranaioi were notoriously unreliable. I waded through the mud ● 484 with my captain from Volos to call on the colonel of the local militia, under whose protection I should be travelling for the rest of my itinerary. There was no news to be had anywhere save of the forthcoming elections.

At ten o'clock the following morning we were making slow progress westwards through melting snow: four militiamen, the president of the village of Elatos and myself; a large American mule floundering astern with the baggage. Above the ruins of Doxaras we turned aside to view 727 the pile of stones which was all that remained of the church of St. 346 George. A few families had returned to this hamlet and were living in nissen huts on the hillside below the ruined church. The whole village had been destroyed.

An hour later we found ourselves among the newly built cottages of Elatos. Above a cluster of wretched *kalyvai* rose the fabric of an unfinished church. The village, the president told us, had been burned down in July, 1942, and reduced to ruins. The work of rebuilding was begun

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in 1945, but two years later the people fled to Grevena and all was left unfinished. Some fifty families had returned in November, 1949, and were now settled in their old houses. The church which was to replace that destroyed by the Germans stood roofless: the windows unglazed, the eikonostasis of rough-hewn timbers. There was a tiny chapel dedicated to the prophet Elias on the brow of the hill, half a mile beyond the village, where the holy mysteries had been celebrated for a time. Now the church which was in Elatos assembled Sunday by Sunday for the breaking of the bread in the half-finished structure which dominated the village.

Whilst we were within the church there was a murmuring amongst the crowd that had gathered in the snow outside: shouts of "Behold! He comes. Make haste, O Papa Iannis!" The parish priest had just returned from Grevena, having followed a more direct route than ourselves. He came scrambling up through the orchard below the church, a ragged figure clad in *kalymmafchion* and tattered overcoat, his boots heavy with mud, his cassock slung across his shoulder, clawing his way up the slope with the aid of a shepherd's staff. We all retired to the *taverna* for a glass of ouzo, and then, after despatching three of the escort with the baggage-mule, the rest of my party (together with two lads from the local militia and the indefatigable Papa Iannis, who, despite his seventy-three years, had already covered the best part of ten miles that morning), set out for the neighbouring village of Anavryta—a deserted hamlet set on the brink of a deep chasm where the inky thread of the Venetikos lay twisted in the pale sunlight. Far away against the towering ramparts of Pindos the ruins of Ziakas could be distinguished: a dark stain on the white vesture which enfolded the silent countryside.

The more enterprising of the Anavrytans had found lodging in the recently reoccupied village of Kallirachi (where we spent the following night) and were planning to return to their houses in the spring. The parish priest at Kallirachi had improvised a temporary oratory where he said the daily offices. The church lay in ruins, and the liturgy was celebrated in a tiny chapel dedicated to St. Demetrius of Thessalonica, a full kilometre from the village. I left my escort at Kallirachi and set out early with a couple of local guides for Megaron, the largest village of the district and, like Kallirachi, reoccupied by its inhabitants some two months earlier. Here I made but a brief stay, as I was anxious to reach Kydonies (which lay well outside the inhabited zone) and get

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727 back to a populated village before nightfall. The *kapetanios* of the local
484 militia undertook to have an escort ready by noon, and in the meantime the parish priest carried me off to the refectory of the police station (where we broke our fast) and thence to see the parish church: an ancient structure roofed with corrugated iron, the walls bulging and sagging ominously at several points.

By one o'clock I was riding westwards on a handsome white mule, with an escort of local militia, armed to the teeth, in line ahead and astern, and all the mountains of Macedonia spread out around the
727 horizon. Kydonies, where we arrived a little after three o'clock, was utterly deserted. It had been a large village (some 175 families, according to my escort), and the destruction was more restricted than in many
[346] villages of this region. The church, like that at Elatos, had apparently been left uncompleted when the people fled: a temporary chapel which occupied the position of the outer narthex was in a ruinous condition. Several eikons lay half buried amongst the fallen masonry. The whole building, like the ruined school-house adjoining it, was daubed with democratic slogans.

727 The parish priest of Kydonies, Papa Athanasius Toskas, had been
793 murdered by the Germans who fell upon the village on July 7th, 1944. Papa Athanasius, despite his sixty-seven years, had gathered up his skirts and made for the forest as fast as his legs would carry him, in company with the curate of the neighbouring village of Ekklesia, Papa Nicolas Tsabiri. The latter succeeded in making good his escape, but Papa Athanasius was surrounded and captured. His body was found some days later, barbarously mutilated. His ears and hands had been cut off, his beard set on fire, and his chest and back slashed with knives.
727 All about the village were little chapels: one which we passed, as we
[346] recrossed the stream at the foot of the hill and turned towards Rodia, had been burned down.

I lay that night at the house of George Sabbas: the house where his brother had been killed before his eyes three years earlier and whence he had fled into the darkness to blunder about the wooded hills all night before reaching Aghios Georgios and safety. The people of Rodia had returned home only two months earlier. The youngest of my host's three sons had married the daughter of the parish priest, and this
793 young woman now kept house for her father-in-law. After supper who should appear but Father Athanasius, the *ephemerios*, who proved to be an old friend from the Kozani seminary. He had come home for the

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793 while in many churches and halls there are regular sermons at other
796 times during the week.

In the country dioceses, owing to the shortage of qualified preachers, sermons are still all too rarely to be heard outside the cathedral towns. The bishop and the diocesan preacher, with such other assistants as can be mustered from local resources, will visit one or two villages every Sunday, but in a diocese of perhaps 100 scattered communities it may well be that months will pass without the majority of the people having the opportunity to hear a sermon. I remember one Macedonian 'saint', who had taken advantage of the cessation of fighting in his diocese from the spring of 1949 onwards to undertake an intensive preaching campaign, telling me that in some villages it was more than ten years since a sermon had last been heard.

793 An energetic *hierokeryx* will often perform wonders; take for instance
796 this typical week-end itinerary of a lay theologian, a member of Zoë,
● 484 who used to be stationed at Kozani; on Saturday afternoon by army truck to Amyntaion (a distance of about fifty-five kilometres) and thence to the village of Lechovo, an hour's journey to the westward towards Kastoria. Here he gives an evening address in the church, the greater part of the community present. On Sunday morning a sermon at the liturgy is followed by an address to the young men and women. After a hurried meal he sets off on foot to the neighbouring village of Skydro for an address, not this time in the church but in the square. Thence he climbs to the village of Nymphaion, high on the mountain-side, for two further addresses before nightfall—one in church, the other, for the young people, in the school. On Monday morning he proceeds by mule to Aetos and thence to Amyntaion and Kozani. The assistant *hierokeryx* of the diocese will in the meantime have set out for the *comopolis* of Servia to preach, from a cart standing in the midst of the square, to the crowds who have gathered there for the weekly market.

793 The Greek *hierokeryx* can in general assume in his hearers a knowledge
796 of the fundamentals of the Christian faith such as can no longer be
537 taken for granted in England, at any rate. He and they will speak a common language—even though many have forgotten the reality that
[785] lies behind the familiar phrases. The outward tokens of a Christian society have still survived to a remarkable degree—the fasts of the Church's year, for instance, are still observed as a matter of course by multitudes who would make no claim to piety above the average. In

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## THE HISTORY OF A COUNTRY PARSON

He had set out from Palaiochori at half-past two that morning, and with the moon often obscured by clouds and with drifts of snow lying deep in places, it was well past ten before he reached the town. We had taken refuge from the bitter winds that scoured the valley of the Peneios and brought sudden flurries of snow down the pass from the mountains above Metsovo, in one of the dimly lighted taverns that open off the main street, and were deep in conversation with the president and schoolmaster from a village away to the north-eastward of Kalambaka when Papa Costas arrived. We shared a further bottle of ouzo and he invited us to lunch in his cottage.

He had come down, he told us, to do some shopping, and was off to Trikkala the next morning. He would return to Palaiochori early the following day. Why did we not come with him and see with our own eyes the ruined villages of Pindos? Mitsos—a cousin, we subsequently discovered—would be in Kalambaka with the remaining animals the next evening and there would be mounts to spare if we would come. We were not afraid of *katsapliades*? We fairly jumped at the suggestion —*katsapliades* indeed! I sat down there and then and addressed a hasty note to the Lord Theokletos, Metropolitan of Grevena, which was carried off by Athanasi and put aboard the afternoon bus to Trikkala, informing him that I should be several days later in reaching his diocese on the fringes of Macedonia than I had supposed. We laid our plans for the journey, and the light was failing as we set out to climb to the monastery of St. Stephen where we were expected that evening.

Two days later we left the monastery at daybreak: all the monks were ill, and, since Basil was away in Trikkala, we had ourselves to unbar the massive doors that open on to the encompassing abyss. Forty minutes after leaving St. Stephen we were breaking our fast at Papa Costas' cottage: scraps of pork, bread soaked in oil, cognac and retsina. Our priest-carpenter had brought back from Trikkala a great saw, and a pig to be fattened against the following winter. The pig, despite loud protestations, was tied up in a sack and slung from his owner's saddle:

"He has a splendid voice—we must make a *psaltes* of him when we get him back to Palaiochori."

We led our horses out along the Metsovo road. Papa Costas' niece, Katina, had been staying at the 'town-house' for the festival and was returning with her uncle to Palaiochori. On the outskirts of Kalambaka we overtook a party of homeward-bound refugees, their beasts heavy-laden with bedding and great copper pans. A little way out of the town

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## THE WATERS OF MARAH

we abandoned the road and struck across the valley towards the river Peneios. The water lapped about our horses' bellies as we forded the swiftly flowing stream, and the potential *psaltes* had a ducking and screeched in muffled protest. Amongst the low hills beyond the river the going was far from easy, and several times we were obliged to dismount and lead our slithering beasts across some particularly difficult stretch of terrain.

About eleven o'clock—soon after we had left the dilapidated cottages and recently rebuilt church of Vanakoulia to our left—we halted outside what had evidently once been a substantial stone house, but which had been burned down and only lately repaired by means of rough-hewn timbers supporting sheets of corrugated iron thrown across the ruins. Here lived Father Constantinos' godparents: well advanced in years and in wisdom, with four sons serving in the army. We broached the cognac and warmed ourselves at the hearth, while the old lady opened one of the wooden chests that lined the tottering walls and brought out walnuts and the golden apples in which this part of Thessaly abounds.

Setting out again a little before noon we descended from the ridge crowned by the ruins of Vanakoulia, and turned eastwards up the boulder-strewn bed of the Aspropotamos. Throughout the rest of the day we journeyed in a desolate landscape of bleached plane trees and white stones, ground and polished by the melting snows; picking our way amongst the boulders of water courses or leading our beasts delicately along narrow paths—mere scratches in the face of the rock—winding high above the torrents and the frozen pools, the long snowy ridges of Pindos far above us.

It was nearly dark when we reached Palaiochori. Mitsos stabled the tired beasts, and the exhausted *psaltes*—long past speech or feeling—was tipped out of his sack into a pile of straw where he lay motionless. Papa Costas led the way upstairs to the living quarters of his parsonage where we were welcomed by his *papadia* and the schoolmistress, a young girl lately come from Ioannina. We supped sitting tailor-wise before the fire, and soon afterwards the women brought in piles of rugs, Papa Costas divested himself of his outer *rason*, and, commending ourselves to the protection of the all-merciful God and of His saints, we all lay down on the floor and were asleep in a twinkling.

In the morning, after breaking our fast with a glass of cognac and a few walnuts, we went to see the church of St. Bessarion. Papa Costas, Mitsos and the churchwardens accompanied us. The interior of the

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727 and horses dispersed and hidden among the rocks; the town occupied
872 by the troops of "a Turkish Binbashi". And yet, amidst all this martial activity and excitement the good people of Metsovo were occupied with repairing one of their schools. "It is incredible", comments this traveller, "how ardent and universal among the Greeks is the desire of instruction . . . even in the wildest spots that man has chosen for a habitation or a refuge." The universal destruction of the village schools during the recent troubled years has done nothing to abate this passionate desire for instruction, which may still be reckoned one of the most striking and attractive features of the Greek character.

123 We did not linger long in Palaiochori. Mitsos was returning to
484 Kalambaka for supplies with a train of pack-animals, and before the sun was fairly round to the south side of the parsonage (where the *psaltes* lay late abed, reflecting upon his astonishing deliverance from the perils to which travellers are subject) the horses were saddled and we were ready to depart.

[888] Some four miles down the valley, where the waters of the Aspropotamos divided, lay the cottage of Nicolas Kokoravas—the *geros*, as he was known in the villages round about. An ancient personage with a great reputation for wisdom, it was whispered that he spoke no less than seven languages. We had made the acquaintance of this venerable polyglot the previous evening, and had paused for a few moments outside his dwelling while one of his numerous grandchildren, a fair girl clad in Vlach costume with two children clinging to her voluminous skirts, had brought us apples as we sat astride our beasts, and Papa Costas had scribbled a hasty note addressed to the president of the village of Chrysomelia (an hour's journey to the eastward) to warn him of our impending visit and asking that an escort might be sent to meet us the following day at the cottage of the *geros*.

"Mitsos will leave you at the house of Papa Nicolas, where the waters divide", explained our priest-carpenter; "there you will await the animals from Chrysomelia."

"At what hour will they come?"

"At twelve, without doubt."

The schoolmistress borrowed Boris' camera and took our *etkon* as we perched upon our high wooden saddles. The children peered out at the door and through the chinks in the United Nations' packing cases. Mitsos led the way down the path between the high drifts of snow towards the bleached plane trees and the polished boulders of the

5:Hammond M-5 (1948-1950)1956
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torrent bed, and we followed while Papa Costas and Spyridon Oikonomides, the *epitropos*, stood beneath the great tree in the village square and waved farewell:

*"Kalo taxeidi; o Theos mazi sas!"*

A good journey; may God go with you.

At dusk we rode into Chrysomelia—a large village lying at 900 metres—after a journey which will long linger in my memory. For the best part of an hour Antony the Zealot (our guide) had questioned me relentlessly as to the constitutions and canons ecclesiastical concerning marriage with a deceased wife's sister within the jurisdiction of the *metropolites* of Canterbury, whilst the mules floundered in deep snow as we climbed laboriously towards the village, the buildings of an abandoned monastery far below among the pines. We had been delayed at the cottage of Papa Nicolas, the *geros*, till it was close on three o'clock. There had been a misunderstanding as to the rendezvous, arising, apparently, from the fact that the curate of the neighbouring hamlet of Aidona was also a Papa Costas.

It was the eve of the feast of St. Antony, and the Zealot was preparing to celebrate his name-day. In a tiny chapel on the outskirts of the shattered village vespers was drawing to a close. The village church, dating from 1580 and dedicated to St. George, was a total ruin. We stayed for the liturgy next morning and all the men and boys of the village accompanied us to church. After a distribution of the blessed bread Papa Athanasius Tsergoulas, the pastor of this mountain flock, took us to see his dwelling—a tiny cell of mud bricks set amidst the ruins of the house which he had built some thirty years earlier—and there we sat around a table in the pale sunlight outside the newly-opened tavern and sipped ouzo with the village elders, while crowds of wild, ragged children played amongst the ruins of the church—there were nearly 300 of them and it was eight years since the school had ceased to perform its liturgy.

Chrysomelia had been one of the most important villages of this region, with a population of 1,050. It had suffered at the hands of the Germans at the same time as Palaiochori. The people had begun to return in October. Scarcely a house in the whole village had escaped destruction.

The devastation was no less widespread at the hamlet of Kato Perlangion, where we slept the following night, wrapped in rugs on the

5:Hammond M-5 (1948-1950)1956
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About eighty of the 200-odd houses in the village had been destroyed. The old school-house was a total ruin and would have, in due course, to be rebuilt from its very foundations. The church of St. Menas had been reopened, and the desks and benches which had arrived a few days earlier had been stacked in the narthex. There was tremendous excitement in the village at the prospect of the reopening of the school. The schoolmaster, who was directing operations when we arrived, had just been released from the army. He proved to be the son of the proprietor of the largest store in Kalambaka. Needless to say, the unexpected advent of the *xenoi* caused all work to be abandoned for the afternoon, and half the village accompanied us to the church. The priest, a young man named Antony, was in a sanatorium near Athens. For the time being his place had been taken by a refugee *papas* from the diocese of Grevena.

[872] 875 123 [793]

The evening brought torrents of rain. We slept at the house of one of the churchwardens and set out for Kalambaka the following morning. The *epitropoi* insisted on accompanying us as far as the river, as they feared lest the Peneios, swollen by the heavy rains, should prove difficult to ford. Fortunately, their anxieties were excessive, and shortly after midday on the feast of St. Euthymius the Great we rode briskly into Kalambaka. My mule, smarting under a sense of outraged propriety at its Frankish rider's use of an umbrella (borrowed from the village president at Vanakoulia) as an instrument of coercion, eyed the

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/16 cont./

The young lady at home virtually becomes a slave. She has to prepare warm water and wash the feet of her father and mother-in-law, do the washing, cooking, sewing, cleaning and work at the loom to prepare cloth for the family. The son has no right to object to the demands of his parents, for the services they expect /17/ from his wife. This custom throughout many centuries has become a part of their philosophy of life and naturally is a part of the good qualities of women.

The work of the women is not seasonal as the men's is. The rush of the summer season decreases in the winter months but the women have to weave, knit, sew, cook, wash the family's clothes and attend the chores. The men during the winter months come together in coffee houses and spend their day in sipping coffee, reading the newspaper and discussing politics.

Work of Husbands.

Unlike many agricultural counties where the work of the husband is more or less distributed more evenly throughout the year, here we have one crop farming that occupies the men for a few months and the rest of the year is spent in the coffee house, which serve as centers of discussion and relaxation. The effect of the coffee houses is great on the individuals.

On bazaar days the husband goes to the market where he spends his time either buying articles of food for his family or to meet his friends and study the market prices of certain commodities.

The long day. During sowing season and harvesting season, which lasts four months of the year, the family /18/ spends long daily hours in the fields. The long hours of work during the rush season obliges the farmer to take his whole family to the fields and enough food to spend the week there. Due to the systems of dividing the land, a farmer besides having six patches scattered on all sides of the village, has to walk 6 miles from the village to get to his fields. Thus the distance and the rush of the work obliges the farmer to sleep in the fields. The usual diet on such long days of hard work is white cheese, black bread, yugourt,

/40 cont./

Vacation and Travel. There is no accepted idea of vacation. Vacation is only for the school children but during the end of harvest season when the farmer /41/ has money he takes his family to the city or to the international fair of Salonica. The men at such leisure times spend their weekends with their friends and relatives in remote villages. The cost of travel makes it hard for most, but their beast of burden, the donkey, serves as a means for this purpose. There is no one in the village who has not traveled in the two continents of Europe and Asia. Some of them have been to Germany, Hungary, Austria, Russia, and Turkey as prisoners in the First War. Some others due to deportation from one country to another, had an unbearable type of travelling. The Government railroads during holidays and early in the fall reduce the cost of train tickets by 50% and thus make it easier for many to travel.

One of the average farmers, with a family of four, spent for the year Drs. 1211 ($7.50) for travel. This sum covers 800 kilometers. The above shows the extensive travelling the men do mostly for business. It is during this travelling period that the farmer brings in and takes out from his village new seeds, new improved methods of cultivation and new customs and forms of community interests.

Protection of Health and Care of the Aged. If there is anything which is neglected in Megali Vrisi it is the /42/ health of the people. In spite of the medical center and the Near East Foundation Children's Nursery Center, where a health project was started, the extent of malaria, tuberculosis, pneumonia and intestinal diseases was just as great as before these agents came in. In fact in one of my surveys with which I tried to find out the death rate of young children from 3 months to 4 years old, four years before the Near East Foundation established itself and five years after its work, the figures of death rate to my surprise were amazingly larger than before, in spite of the Near East Foundation's efforts. After my eight years of experience with the farmers I was convinced of the inadequacy of the existing health program which was

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/45 cont./

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sickle | 2 | 40 | |
| Axes | 1 | 70 | |
| Wagons | 1 | 2,500 | |
| | | | 4,200 |
| | | Grand total | 31,510 |

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A one crop farm does not offer regular income year after year. Due to diversity of climatic conditions there are on the average 3 good years to one poor year. Because of the recent settlement of the farmers their needs are great not only for their families but also for their farms, such as tools, animals, stables, barns, better houses and payment of their loans. The poor years increase the debts of the farmer tremendously and if unable to pay them he tries to find a refuge by telling lies.

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The Pattern of Land use. One of the greatest troubles that the farmer of Megali Vrisi has is in getting to and from his fields. His share of land which is composed of 45 stremas (10 1/2 acres), is divided into 7 fields. The smallest piece is 1/4 of an acre and the largest 2 acres. The government in its endeavor to give equal chance to all farmers has divided the land into /46/ 7 categories according to fertility and the distance from the village. Thus the nearest field is 1/5 of a mile and the farthest one is 4 1/2 miles. This type of division, besides consuming time to and from the fields and tiring the animals with unnecessary walking, also reduces the productiveness through poor management of the fields. Rotation is neglected since the farmers having their fields in certain section have to agree on crop plantation with their neighbors. The fencing of the individual fields is impossible and anyone can pasture any field after the crops are removed. There is a law that gives the right of pasturing the fields by anyone after the crops are removed.

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We can summarize the good and bad points for such a distribution of land.

Advantages:

1. Gives equal opportunity to each farmer to have equal share of fertile as well as of infertile land.

/75 cont./

to read and write. Besides this, agricultural lectures were given to the farmers by the agriculturist of the area during the winter months on different topics concerning the farming life of the area. A series of 5 lectures were organized by the priest of the village on different topics such as history, travel, biography, and inventions. Thus the farmers of Megali Vrisi had an ample chance to get whatever they could from these different agencies.

873 [544] [242] [793]

/76/ Part VII Religion

Magic. The people of Megali Vrisi, due to numerous activities of an educational character that have been established there, find themselves in a transition period of trying to put aside old beliefs and adopt new ones. They still believe that certain people in the village have power to command the spirits and perform miracles. A young man who thinks that his sweetheart does not like him finds as an outlet the consultation of magicians and their command of the spirits to change her mind. If a member of the family is in a foreign country or on travel the magicians are asked to order the spirits to protect them. A pregnant woman desiring to give birth to a boy instead of a girl asks the magicians to act favorably to her desires. The people who perform the role of a magician are old women with suspicious looks. The same women may act as mid-wives, too.

789 [178] [832] [484] [843] [791] [759]

Certain signs handed down from generation to generation are believed to be true. A black cat crossing the road is thought a bad sign. If you meet a priest early in the morning, they think the whole day will be filled with failures. Dogs crying mean somebody is going /77/ to die in the neighborhood. When the eyelid moves fast some good news is coming.

777 [763]

The above are a few of the good and bad luck signs.

Religious beliefs. Almost every farmer has a Saint in whom he believes strongly. The ikon of the Saint, in front of which he

353 778 776

/94 cont./
the evening they sit in the coffee houses, either reading newspapers, chatting politics, playing cards, or playing tavli, (a game which is played in the Near East countries). At these slack seasons visiting /95/ takes place within the village mostly by women who take their knitting and gossip. The men visit distant villages where they happen to have relatives. It is surprising to find how much this distant visiting carries back and forth either methods of agriculture or exchange of seed or discussion of community organization plans. Nothing like distant visiting could be more profitable to the visitor and to the visited relative. It is costly and seldom done by women.

Bazaars. Twice a week the bazaar or market takes place at the nearby towns of Kilkis and Herson. Every farmer, whether or not he has worked, has to go to bazaar. Those that go for shopping, take with them either poultry, eggs, cheese, butter, wheat, oats, barley, chickpea, a pig, a heifer, a cow, a calf, or an ox. No villager who goes to bazaar will ever go without some agricultural product. The price of the above mentioned commodities depends on the amount brought to the bazaar and the number of merchants present on that day. Price is set by the supply and demand of the day. The farmers go to and from bazaar loaded. Usually they carry the load on their shoulders or use an animal. In exchange for their agricultural products they get /96/ kerosene, thread, buttons, needles, rice, sugar, tea, dried fish, beans, candy, olives, olive oil, soap and salt. Most farmers hang around the bazaar corners, watch the bargaining tricks of livestock merchants, visit friends from other villages, buy and sell oxen, or watch the bazaar price for different commodities. For many a farmer these bazaars are reliable centers of information to know how he can advantageously exchange his goods with the needs of his family. Most farmers seldom use money for buying goods to meet their family needs. Based on long experience, the farmer found it safer to keep his goods rather than money. Money he thinks creates more enemies than anything else.

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in Central and Southern Europe from the 12th to the 15th centuries. He moreover tends to consider their «naturalisation» as the work of travelling builders, who belonged to the builders' guilds, because of the fact that they are called «mastori» in Albania.

Nopcsa remarks to the above, (p. 54) that the word «maistor» has been used in Serbia since 1350 and that it is common in Byzantium in the form of «Protomaistor». It would, however, be more correct to say that the words «maistor» and «protomaistor» that originate in the Latin word «magister» (earlier: μάγιστρος, μαγίστωρ) have had the meaning of a nobleman or a teacher first, and later that of

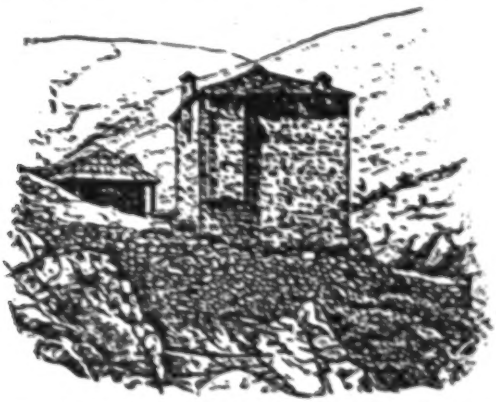

Fig. 75 A kula in Sapatsi, in the area of the Berisha tribe
(Nopcsa, fig. 41)

a craftsman and a master-artisan, since the first Byzantine years; and they are used in exactly the same spelling in modern Greek language, under exactly the same form as in Albania, i.e. mastoras-mastoroi and protomastoras. A great number of villages in Epirus, Western Mecedonia and the Pindus, especially in the areas of Konitsa, Korytsa, Metsovon, Malakassi, Houliarades, Tzoumerka and Voïon, are known as «Μαστοροχώρια» (builders' villages), because almost all their inhabitants have been builders by profession centuries ago. For months on end, carrying the tools of their craft, they travelled all over the Balcan peninsula as far as Bucharest and Constantinople, and more so in Epirus and Albania, in groups or guilds, under the leadership

1) Sophocles' Dictionary: Μάγιστρος and Μαγίστωρ: master-workman, master-builder.

2 [i.e. Haberlandt - ANALYST.]

9:Megas I,B-5,4 (no date) 1951 EH1 Greece EH1
Albania EG1

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of a masterbuilder (1). Haberlandt is then right when he states that the construction of Albanian towers was the work of travelling builder's guilds. The origin, however, of these builders must not be sought, as Haberlandt suggests, in the countries over the Adriatic and in Southern Italy; neither, as Nopcsa thinks, in Northern Italy and the Alpine regions, but in the Balkan peninsula itself, in an area which is very near to Albania as well, and whose inhabitants knew both the Albanian language and their customs well, so that they could freely enter that rough and inhospitable country. (2).

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It is true that in Greece towers are only found in Mani, because social conditions and especially the vendetta have made defensive measures against personal and family enemies necessary, exactly as in Chimara and Albania. Before the liberation of Thessaly, however, the system of the above fortified towers was widely prevalent there,

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1) Here below I am giving a translation of a recently published survey by Mrs. **A. Hadjimihali**: «La maison grecque». «Each of these builders' villages has specialised in some part of building. Certain villages supplied builders, others decorators, others painters, woodworkers, etc. All these builders were known under the general name of «μαστόροι», whatever their speciality was. The master- builders, each leading a group of builders, formed notable guilds known under the local name of «λιάφι». In Vannena, the builders' guild counted about 450 members, belonging to various branches of building art.

Each master-builder was the head of a group of about 10 to 20 men. Groups, however, who undertook big construction projects, had sometimes up to 100 men: builders, marble sculpters, decorators, painters, carpenters, turners, woodcarvers, etc. These builder guilds were leaving their villages under the leadership of their masters towards the middle of February and went to the place where work had been found. Their departure was cause for feasts, and so was their return in December, or round Christmas to the latest. (A desctription of these fiests is given here). These guilds were thus travelling from Macedonia and Epirus, all over the Balkan peninsula as far as Bucharest, Constantinople and even Asia Minor. Buildings constructed by these groups are found in all these countries: Graceful bridges on bold arches, famous churches, monasteries, immense caravan serais, houses of noblemen, public buildings, palaces, minarets, mosques, bell-towers, etc.» (L'Hellénisme Contemporain, Serie B, year 3, (1949) p. 250)

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167
177

See also note 2 on page 79. Builders of Epirus, who have constructed the beautiful noblehouses of Western Macedonia, seem to be fully aware of the value and perfection of their work. One of the most beautiful houses of Siatista, built in 1754, has the following inscription on a glass pane: «Should you ask, my lords, what builder built this house, Nacos is his name, and he comes from Konitsa». (Ὁ Φάρος τῆς Βορ. Ἑλλάδος, 1939 p. 242).

2) **Ph. Koukoules.** Περὶ τὴν βυζαντινὴν οἰκίαν. p. 117.

introduced under the direction of the Rockefeller Foundation. In the thirties, the dictator Metaxas introduced a number of changes by fiat, which ran counter to Greek values, but many of which were accepted gratefully by people wearied of political dissension and lack of leadership. World War II, with its displacements and destruction and enemy occupation, the work of UNRRA and the Greek War Relief, and more recently, of the POS agency of the ECA, have all been agents of change.

There are many kinds of Greeks. The million or so Greeks who came from Turkey and Russia in the twenties differ from the so-called "old Greeks". The city Greeks consider themselves very different from the peasants. There is a vogue for peasant handicrafts but not for peasant attitudes. Urban Greeks like to take on the ways of foreigners, to use the products of technology, even the processed foods of technology. Many French and English words are used in their speech. They take on the attitudes of the Western World, using clocked time in business and living a life relatively pressed for time, adopting to some extent the Western scientific approach and objective external limits, instead of the more animistic approach and the body-patterned limits of traditional Greek culture. There are lectures here on health and hygiene, on child care and co-operation and nutrition. In Athens, the music and the drama are excellent, and in line with Euro-American developments. There is rapid transportation. There are many associations based on foreign patterns: the YMCA and the YWCA, the Girl Guides and the Boy Scouts, football groups and hiking groups. There are foreign attitudes about travel: people go to tour the country or the world, instead of going to visit a relative or a family friend or a miraculous shrine. The difference reaches its greatest intensity as between the educated Greeks and the peasants, who, though literate, have no high education.

People of different regions have a different way of life. The mountainous terrain, the absence of easy communication except coast-wise, differences in dialect and local history, and, most of all, the extreme personal independence of the people, have fostered tremendous variation from place to place. To the world at large, a man may be a Greek, but to other Greeks, he is a Macedonian, an Arcadian, or an Epirot. More than this, he comes from a particular village of which he is very proud and for whose honour he competes with other villages. In the United States, Greeks from one village, such as Mani, have organized themselves in a nationwide organization. People from one small island speak of the people of the neighbouring island as queer or ill-mannered. This is as it should be; in Greek culture it is good for everyone to be different or, as the Greeks put it, to be individually formed.

The differences are there but the similarities are more basic. The Athenians, working by clock time, strain at their bonds, and do not

is smell which makes the cravings of a pregnant woman not to be denied. A neighbour automatically puts aside a bit of her cooking to send to the pregnant woman next door; and in a grocery store, a customer often offers a "smell" of the olives she has bought to a pregnant customer.

Orderliness is a highly valued quality. Love songs mention the orderly hair, the orderly teeth. The most recent book on child care lays great stress on avoiding the disordering of a child's teeth and facial contours, giving several sketches and photographs of wrong ways of laying the child in bed or postures in sitting at a school desk which might lead to crookedness, and detailed descriptions of specific distortions and their causes. In houses which contain only one room, areas of work and living are carefully specified and maintained through scrupulous order. The Greek equivalent of "set to rights" or "all right" or "under control" is "in order".

The covering of the *philotimo* and the covering of the naked fact find their counterpart, if not their basis, in the body. The body is never naked or, perhaps, only when absolutely necessary. Mothers often arrange to bathe and change the baby without undressing it all at once. The new pediatric practices and the new books on child care demand immersion, but it is all a matter of hygiene; no joy in the naked baby is mentioned anywhere. Conversely, dress, and particularly festive dress, "dress of splendour" and ornamentation, are of great importance, and in fact, are essential to complete the body. When beautiful girls are described, their clothing and their jewellery are given at least as much place as their bodily charms, and are not treated separately; and when a brave youth, a *pallicari*, is mentioned, his trappings are part of the picture. Jewellery and brilliant clothes, woven with gold and silver thread, figure largely in the lullabies, as well as in the love songs and wedding songs. And the lower world which holds no joy is a place where there are no ornamental trappings. The naked body, like the naked word, is stark and grim and incomplete.

The body and the self, the Greek person, delimit, pattern and give shape to relationships and experience. All relationships start with the body and continue along lines of physiological relatedness. They are extended along lines of concrete personal contact. Greeks travel, but mainly along a chain of personal relationships; they go to see a friend of a relative of a friend, and the end, however distant, is concretely linked through persons with the original person. Progress is amelioration of the concretely experienced, or the benefit of immediate relatives or friends or linked persons. The new can be introduced, not for the benefit of mankind or even the Greeks, but for the benefit of people along related lines, and better still, it can be introduced by a known and respected intermediary.

Figures on a chart mean very little to Greeks, and when they refer to people, may even be offensive. Foundations, such as the Near